Why We Cannot Conquer the Filipinos.

THE problem of Philippine conquest is not a military one. This country undoubtedly has the physical force to make the islands a desolation and call it peace. We can harry their coasts. We can ravage their fields. We can drive their fleeing inhabitants to mountain fastnesses and dash their little ones against a stone. If it is a mere question of brute strength — of money and men and ships and guns — we can employ it without limit. We can kill and burn and destroy like avengers of God. No one doubts that. Mr. McKinley, in boasting of the new forces he has got together for bending the Filipinos to his will, is only glorying as a full-grown man might in his ability to break every bone in the body of the street waif. The disparity is too glaring. If we exert our giant's strength to crush the Filipinos, we can undoubtedly do it. But what we assert is that it is not a question of mere *force majeure*. There are moral obstacles in our path more terrible than an army with banners. If we wage a war of extermination against the Filipinos, they will have invisible allies mightier than all the battalions that tread the earth, so that they that be with them are more than they that be with us, and we can never conquer them.

We cannot conquer the Filipinos because we cannot, as a nation, place ourselves in a pillory to become the hissing of mankind; cannot justify the bitter taunt of the Spaniard that our pretended unselfishness and humanity were but thinly veiled greed and cruelty; cannot give fresh edge to the sneers of Germans at our vaunted purpose to set a captive race free, and to the cynicism of Frenchmen at the expense of our mission of justice and liberty; cannot make our best friends in England hang their heads in shame; cannot put it in the power of the civilized world to say that our generous professions were a hollow mockery and our plighted faith no better than a harlot's vow.

We cannot conquer the Filipinos because we cannot march over the dead bodies of our national leaders and prophets and heroes; cannot look into the grave and troubled face of Washington bidding us remember that "the basis of our political system" is the right of a people to make its own government, and urging us to exhibit to the world the "too novel example of a people always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence"; cannot, in Lincoln's presence, "ask a just God's assistance" in the effort to "bestride the necks of a people because they will be better off for being ridden"; cannot, with McKinley leading us, do what he said would be an act of "criminal aggression"; cannot welcome and applaud Dewey while going in the teeth of his saying, "Rather than make a war of conquest of this people, I would up anchor and sail out of the harbor."

We cannot conquer the Filipinos because we cannot use any of our historic battle-cries in the fight against them; cannot allow our soldiers to give one countersign of liberty, while pursuing them; cannot arm our officers and men with the triple armor of a just cause; cannot nerve our troops with a hatred of the enemy nearly as intense as their hatred of the cruel and repellant work they are set to do; cannot look upon a victory except with shame that it is won over a foeman so unworthy of our steel; cannot ask a beaten army to surrender and trust to our good faith, lest the taunt be thrown in our face, as it was in President Schurman's by a Filipino envoy, that American good faith is not a thing to be considered seriously.

We cannot conquer the Filipinos because the country and Congress will not give the President the money necessary to pursue his ruthless work; because an outraged public sentiment will demand that he quit doing what we went to war with Spain to stop her doing; because burdened taxpayers will protest against being made to pay for shot and shell to do the work which wise statesmanship should be able to do without the firing of a gun; because we are too great a nation to trample on the weak, too free a people to permit chains to be riveted on another race by our agents and in our name, and too jealous a republican commonwealth to see our blood and treasure poured out in distant lands for the benefit of a favored few.

And if, in spite of all, the war of conquest and extermination is pushed to its bloody end; if the last Filipino town goes up in smoke and flame; if the last armed native is brought to bay in swamp or pass, and falls under our volleys; it is not the Filipinos who will be conquered; they, even as they die before the pitiless hail of our bullets, may well exclaim: "Americans, you have not conquered us, you have conquered yourselves; in our ruin you have pulled down the pillars of your own temple of liberty; in beating us down you have trampled upon your own history and principles; in destroying our republic you have destroyed your own."

WILL FIGHT TO THE DEATH.

MONTREAL, Aug. 29. — Dr. Mariano Ponce, private secretary to Emilio Aguinaldo, is here en route from London to Manila. In an interview he said:

"My country fights and will fight for her independence, because she is fully convinced that it is a duty imposed by Providence. The ambition of a powerful nation is not enough to make her renounce her destiny. She is ready to make every sacrifice for the defence of the freedom of the land. The last word in the question has been said by my nation. The Philippines will become an American possession only when there are no more Filipinos."

Are you in favor of this bloodshed and extermination? If not, please read carefully and circulate this statement.